



Funeral Preparations for

Christian Funeral Rites

In the face of death, the Church confidently proclaims that God has created each person for eternal life and that Jesus, the Son of God, by his death and resurrection, has broken the chains of sin and death that bound humanity. Christ ‘achieved his task of redeeming humanity and giving perfect glory to God, principally by the paschal mystery of his blessed passion, resurrection from the dead and glorious ascension’ (Constitution on the Liturgy, art. 5).

The Christian funeral ritual has sacred purposes:

- To proclaim our absolute faith in the transforming reality of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ in the midst of a world of others who may, or may not believe;
- To provide a concrete way for the living to begin the painful process of continuing life in the midst of grief, supported by the church and her members;
- To bless and sanctify the passing of one of our own to the fulfillment of the Scriptural promise of eternal life, in the midst of the worship life of the community of believers.

The *Order of Christian Funerals (OCF)* states: “By means of the funeral rites it has been the practice of the Church, as a tender mother, not simply to commend the dead to God, but also to raise high the hope of its children and give witness to its faith in the future resurrection of the baptized with Christ” (*OCF*, p. xi).

It should always be our intent to celebrate the funeral rites to offer worship, praise and thanksgiving to God for the gift of life now returned to God, and to rekindle the hope of the just, even in the hour of grief over the loss of a loved one.

Those for whom Christian rites can be offered

Funeral rites are to be provided for:

- Baptized Catholics and for catechumens, since they are considered to be members of the Christian faithful.
- Children who died before their baptism but whose parents intended that they be baptized, as well as for a fetus or still-born child no matter how death occurred.
- In some cases Catholic funeral rites can be celebrated for non-Catholic baptized persons unless it is contrary to their will and provided their own minister is not available.
- Those who commit suicide due to mental illness are allowed to have a Catholic funeral mass celebrated.
- Lack of registration in a parish is not to be used as a reason for denying funeral rites in the parish in which they lived.

Normally, the funeral rites for the faithful departed are to be celebrated in his or her parish church. At the request of the deceased or those charged with arranging the funeral, the funeral rites may be celebrated in another Catholic church with the consent of those having charge of the Church and after having informed the deceased person's pastor.

A Funeral Mass is not permitted to be celebrated in a funeral home or a private home.



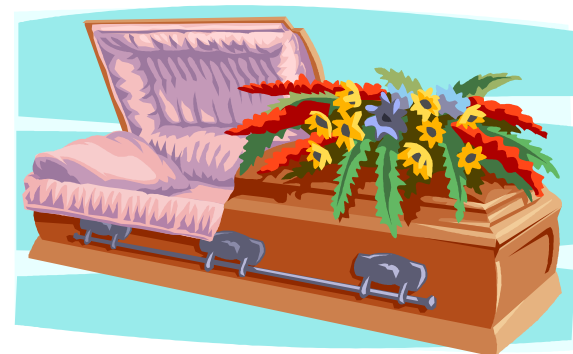
The Disposition of the Body

The Church earnestly recommends that the pious custom of burying the bodies of the deceased be observed.

“For Catholic Christians, cemeteries, especially Catholic cemeteries, call to mind the resurrection of the dead. In addition, they are the focus for the Church’s remembering of the dead and offering prayer for them.” (*OCF*, Appendix, 416) The preferred place of burial for Catholics is the Catholic Cemetery. Catholics should be buried in a place that witnesses the shared faith of our Catholic community.

The Church prefers that the body be buried since the body of a deceased Catholic Christian is also the body once washed in baptism, anointed with the oil of salvation, and fed with the Bread of life.

“The Church clearly prefers and urges that the body of the deceased be present for the funeral rites, since the presence of the human body better expresses the values which the church affirms in those rites.” (*OCF*, Appendix, 413) Therefore, it is preferred that the body be present during the Funeral Mass, and that cremation occur after the Mass is concluded.





Cremated remains are to be treated with the same respect as the body. Cremated remains may not be scattered, subdivided, crafted into jewelry, pottery, or other objects, or kept at home, but are to be buried or placed in a columbarium (see *OCF*, Appendix, 416-417). The Catholic Church likewise asks that the Christian faithful continue to offer prayer for deceased family members and friends. The annual celebration of All Souls Day, the commemoration of all the faithful departed on November 2, attests to this salutary practice. Masses celebrated for the deceased on the anniversaries of death or at other significant times continue the Church's prayer and remembrance.

Whenever possible, appropriate means for recording with dignity the memory of the deceased should be adopted, such as a plaque or stone which records the name of the deceased.



Liturgical Elements

The funeral rites are ordinarily to include the Vigil for the Deceased, the Funeral Liturgy, and the Rite of Committal.

The Vigil Service

The vigil for the deceased is the principal rite celebrated by the Christian community in the time following death and before the funeral liturgy. The vigil may be celebrated in the home of the deceased, in the funeral home, parlor or chapel of rest, or in some other suitable place. It may also be celebrated in the church...at a time well before the funeral liturgy.

At the vigil the Christian community keeps watch with the family in prayer to the God of mercy and finds strength in Christ's presence. It is the first occasion among the funeral rites for the solemn reading of the word of God. In this time of loss the family and community turn to God's word as the source of faith and hope, as light and life in the face of darkness and death. Consoled by the redeeming word of God and by the abiding presence of Christ and his Spirit, the assembly at the vigil calls upon the Father of mercy to receive the deceased into the kingdom of light and peace.

THE WORD OF GOD

In every celebration for the dead, the Church attaches great importance to the reading of the word of God. The readings proclaim the paschal mystery, teach remembrance of the dead, convey the hope of being gathered together again in God's kingdom, and encourage the witness of Christian life. Above all, the readings tell of God's designs for a world in which suffering and death will relinquish their hold on all whom God has called his own.

In the celebration of the liturgy of the word at the funeral liturgy, the biblical readings may not be replaced by non-biblical readings. But during prayer services with the family non-biblical readings may be used in addition to readings from Scripture (*OCF*, 23).

The Funeral Liturgy

The funeral liturgy is the central liturgical celebration of the Christian community for the deceased. At the funeral liturgy the community gathers with the family and friends of the deceased to give praise and thanks to God for Christ's victory over sin and death, to commend the deceased to God's tender mercy and compassion, and to seek strength in the proclamation of the paschal mystery.

The funeral liturgy has four parts: the reception of the body, the celebration of the liturgy of the word, the liturgy of the eucharist, and the final commendation and farewell.

Outline of the Rite

*** Receiving the deceased at the Church**

The church is the place where the Christian life is begotten in baptism, nourished in the eucharist, and where the community gathers to commend one of its deceased members to the Father. Through the use of various baptismal symbols the community shows the reverence due to the body, the temple of the Spirit, and in this way prepares for the funeral liturgy.

Any flowers, national flags or the flags or insignias of associations to which the deceased belonged are removed from the coffin at the entrance of the church. They will be replaced after the coffin has been taken from the church.

The minister sprinkles the coffin with holy water in remembrance of the deceased person's initiation and first acceptance into the community of faith. A funeral pall, a reminder of the garment given at baptism and therefore signifying life in Christ, is then placed on the coffin by family members, friends, or the minister. The entrance procession follows.

Gathering Song (Please fill out the form on page 12)

*** Liturgy of the Word** (See page 12-13 for selections.)

1st Reading

Responsorial Psalm

2nd Reading

Verse before the Gospel

Gospel Reading

*** Liturgy of the Eucharist**

Having been spiritually renewed at the table of God's word, the community now turns for spiritual nourishment at the table of the eucharist. The community with the priest offers to the Father the sacrifice of the New Covenant and shares in the one bread and the one cup. In partaking of the body of Christ, all are given a foretaste of eternal life in Christ and are united with Christ, with each other, and with all the faithful, living and dead.

The liturgy of the eucharist takes place in the usual manner at the funeral mass. A song may accompany the procession with the gifts.

Song during the preparation of the gifts
Communion Song

A note, that remembrances or eulogies are not allowed at the Funeral Mass

***Final Commendation and Farewell**

The final commendation is a final farewell by the members of the community, an act of respect for one of their members, whom they entrust to the tender and merciful embrace of God. This act of last farewell also acknowledges the reality of separation and affirms that the community and the deceased, baptized into the one Body, share the same destiny, resurrection on the last day. After a moment of silent prayer, the body is shown a sign of respect as the temple of the Holy Spirit by the use of incense.

Procession to the Place of Committal

This final procession of the funeral rite mirrors the journey of human life as a pilgrimage to God's kingdom of peace and light, the new and eternal Jerusalem.

*** Rite of Committal**

The rite of committal, the conclusion of the funeral rites, is the final act of the community of faith in caring for the body of its deceased member. This rite is normally celebrated beside the open grave or place of interment.

In committing the body to its resting place, the community expresses the hope that, with all those who have gone before marked with the sign of faith, the deceased awaits the glory of the resurrection. The rite of committal is an expression of the communion that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven: the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer but see God face to face.

Through this act of committing the human remains to the ground, the community of faith proclaims that the grave or place of interment, once a sign of futility and despair, has been transformed by means of Christ's own death and resurrection into a sign of hope and promise.

Music Selections:

The parish hymnal is used to select music for the funeral rite. Suggested hymns are: Abide with Me, Amazing Grace, Ave Maria, Come to Me, I know that my Redeemer Lives, On Eagles Wings, Here I am, Lord, Be Not Afraid, The Lord is my Light, Unless a Grain of Wheat, Sing with all the Saints in Glory, How Great Thou Art, Jesus Christ is Risen Today, Lord of all Hopefulness, Love Divine All Love Excelling, There's a Wideness in God's Mercy, Prayer of St. Francis.

Funeral Rites of the Catholic Church

For the funeral of: _____

Address: _____

Mortuary: _____

Address: _____ Phone: _____

Cemetery: _____

Spouse: _____

Parents: _____

Siblings: _____

Children: _____

Do you wish to be cremated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Do you wish to have a funeral Mass celebrated? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Date of baptism: _____

Which parish? _____ Where _____

Cemetery? _____

Primary Contact and phone number to plan the funeral Mass?

Contact: _____ Phone: _____

Funeral Mass Preparations

Processional Song: _____

1st Reading: _____

Psalm Response: _____

2nd Reading: _____

Verse before the Gospel: _____

Gospel Reading: _____

Song during preparation of the gifts: _____

Communion Song: _____

Recessional Song: _____

Reading Selections:

First Reading:

Maccabees 12:43-46

Job 19:1, 23-27a

Wisdom 3:1-9 or 3:1-6,9

Wisdom 4:7-15

Isaiah 25:6a, 7-9

Lamentations 3: 17-26 Daniel 12: 1-3

(During the Easter Season the following may be used:)

Acts 10:34-43 or 10:34-36, 42-43 Revelation 14:13

Revelation 20:11-21:1

Revelation 21:1-5a, 6b-7

Responsorial Psalm:

Psalm 23

Psalm 26

Psalm 27

Psalm 42

Psalm 63

Psalm 103

Psalm 116

Psalm 122

Psalm 130

Psalm 143

Second Reading:

Romans 5:5-11	Romans 5:17-21	Romans 6:3-9
Romans 8:14-23	Romans 8:31b-39	Romans 14:7-12
1 Cor 15:20-28	1 Cor 15:51-57	2 Cor 4:14-5:1
2 Cor 5:1,6-10	Philippians 3:20-21	1 Thess. 4:13-18
2 Tim 2:8-13	1 John 3:1-2	1 John 3:14-16

Gospel Selections:

Verse before the Gospel:

Mt 11:25 Mt 25:34 Jn 3:16 Jn 6:39 Jn 6:40 Jn 6:51 Jn 11:25a, 26
Phil 3:20 2 Tim 2:11-12a Rev 1:5a, 6b Rev 14:13

Gospel Reading:

Matthew 5:1-12a	Matthew 11:25-30	Matthew 25:1-13
Matthew 25:31-46	Mark 15:33-39; 16:1-6	Mark 15:33-39
Luke 7:11-17	Luke 12:35-40	Luke 23:33, 39-43
Luke 23:44-24:1-6a	Luke 23:44-46, 50, 52-53	Luke 24:13-35
Luke 24:13-6, 28-35	John 5:24-29	John 6:37-40
John 6:51-59	John 11:17-27	John 11:21-27
John 11:32-45	John 12:23-26	John 14:1-6
John 17:24-26	John 19:17-18, 25-39	

Catholic Cemeteries in the Archdiocese of Seattle:

Calvary Cemetery

5041-35th Ave NE

Seattle WA 98105

206-622-0996

martym@acc-seattle.org

Gethsemane Cemetery

37600 Pac. Hwy. S

Federal Way, WA 98003

253-838-2240

fmcclain@acc-seattle.org

Holyrood Cemetery

205 NE 205th St

Shoreline, WA 98155

206-363-8404

marks@acc-seattle.org

St. Patrick Cemetery

S. 204 and Orillia Rd

Kent, WA

253-838-2240

fmcclain@acc-seattle.org

The information contained in this booklet comes from:

Order of Christian Funerals, Catholic Book Publishing Co., New Jersey, 1998.

Many Gifts, One Spirit. Pastoral and Sacramental Policies for the Archdiocese of Seattle, The Most Revered Alexander J. Brunett, Archbishop of Seattle. Promulgated as particular law for the Archdiocese of Seattle, effective March 29, 2007.

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Local Funeral Home:

**Wallin Stucky Funeral Home &
Cremation**

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Oak Harbor, WA 98277

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